

Home, Lawn & Garden

A little time and energy now will save lawn and garden

Many Milton homeowners are looking with dismay at the condition of their lawns after this year's heavy and damaging winter snow and ice. With the right care now, most lawns and gardens can recover.

"This has been a tough winter for nearly everyone in southern Ontario," admits Phil Lawton, co-owner of Taylor Nursery which has been serving Milton gardeners for 39 years. "The first step is to rake up the lawn to remove leaves and debris once the lawn is dry enough that your rake is not pulling out grass roots. If your lawn has 'snow mould' and looks fuzzy, raking will help disperse that too."

Apply fertilizer now

Lawton recommends an application of quality, name-brand fertilizer that is high in nitrogen, to feed the grass now and get healthy growth started. If overseeding is needed to thicken your lawn or fill in bare spots, April is a good time to apply it.

"We also recommend using Corn Gluten on your lawn, as a natural, chemical-free way to help inhibit the growth of weeds and crabgrass," commented Lawton, "but don't use this product at the same time as putting down lawn seed because it will stop grass seed growth too. We can recommend a schedule for fertilizing, seeding and use of weed inhibitors when you visit our garden centre."



Gardens, trees and shrubs also took a beating this winter. April is a good time to rake up debris in the gardens and loosen up the earth.

If you see lines of earth breaking through the sod or areas of excavation in your lawn, that could be the work of voles, a small burrowing mammal.

Winter nuisance

"Voles are usually a winter nuisance," explained Lawton. "Rake up their pathways, seed and lightly top dress the dam-

aged areas of your lawn."

Gardens, trees and shrubs also took a beating in harsh winter conditions this year. Lawton suggests raking up debris in the gardens now and assessing the condition of trees and shrubs.

"Now is the time to prune broken branches off shrubs and trees and clean

up any limbs that were ripped away during the ice and wind storms," Lawton advised. "Trim away dead wood and thin out excessive growth at the same time so new growth will be focussed on healthy branches and stalks."

Cultivate in April

If your gardens are bare soil, you can cultivate in April to loosen the earth and make it ready for planting but watch out for bulbs and perennials that may be poking their heads out tentatively looking for the sun.

"You can really help your garden beds by putting down a good layer of mulch (or topping up existing mulch) in the spring," explains Lawton.

"Mulch helps keep moisture in—and reduces the need to water—and inhibits weed growth in gardens...and it looks great too. There are lots of different types of mulch available and each will provide a different look to complement your yard and home. For the healthiest garden, cultivate the soil, add soil where needed, fertilize

with a granular fertilizer, then finish with mulch. Your annuals, perennials and shrubs will flourish and make you look like a real professional gardener."

Taylor Nursery is located at the east end of Main Street on 5th Line and is now open seven days a week.

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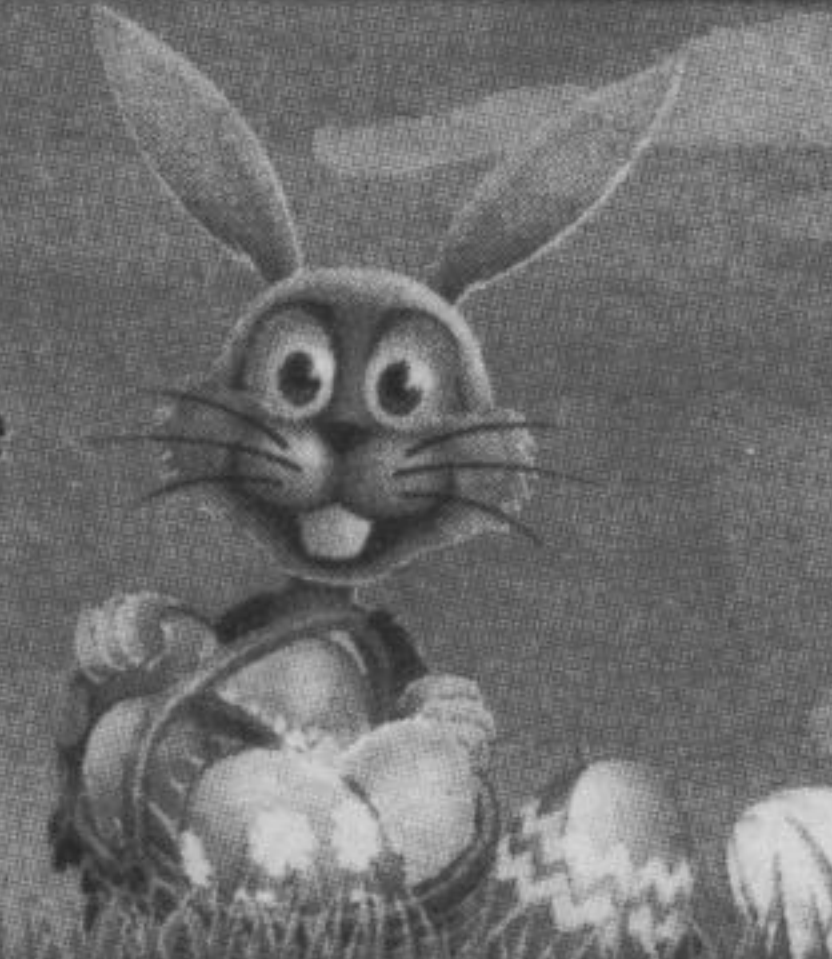
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info@taylornursery.ca

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